

News and Events

Willing P

Leicester's work with schools and colleges boosts attainment and raises the aspiration of the region's young people. A programme of master classes, mentoring and university visits inspires primary school children. This work

development

current needs as the strategy and individual needs of opportunities includes short courses leading to certification in subject updating, familiarising in new technology, award

June
21 Monday
(172-193)
Summer Solstice – Summer begins

Scientists suggest significant scale of human impact on planet has changed course of Earth's history

Posted by [ap507](#) at Oct 02, 2017 01:24 PM | [Permalink](#)

Anthropocene Working Group scientists publish recommendations for formalising new geological epoch

The significant scale of human impact on our planet has changed the course of Earth history, an international team of scientists led by our School of Geography, Geology and the Environment has suggested.

The researchers suggest that a multitude of human impacts have changed the course of Earth's geological history, and the scale of these justifies developing a formal proposal that the Anthropocene – a concept improvised by the Nobel Prize-winning scientist Paul Crutzen in 2000 – should be made part of the Geological Time Scale.

Rapid changes to the planet include acceleration of rates of erosion and sedimentation; large-scale chemical perturbations to the cycles of carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus and other elements; the inception of significant change to global climate and sea level; and biotic changes including unprecedented levels of species invasions across the Earth.

This is a summary of the findings and interim recommendations of the international working group that has been studying the Anthropocene since 2009. Initially reported to the 2016 International Geological Congress at Cape Town, South Africa, the findings and recommendations have just been published online in the journal *Anthropocene*.

Professor Jan Zalasiewicz from our School of Geography, Geology and the Environment, said: "Our findings suggest that the Anthropocene should follow on from the Holocene Epoch that has seen 11.7 thousand years of relative environmental stability, since the retreat of the last Ice Age, as we enter a more unstable and rapidly evolving phase of our planet's history."

The Anthropocene Working Group - which includes Leicester geologists Jan Zalasiewicz, Mark Williams and honorary chair, Colin Waters, and archaeologist Matt Edgeworth - has been active since 2009, analysing the case for formalisation of the Anthropocene, a potential new epoch of geological time dominated by human impact on the Earth.

- [A version of the new paper can be accessed here](#)
 - [Press release](#)

An audio interview about changes to the Earth with Professors Jan Zalasiewicz and Mark Williams is available here:





University of Leicester

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